

**In the Claims**

1. (Cancelled.)
2. (Cancelled.)
3. (Cancelled.)
4. (Cancelled.)
5. (Cancelled.)
6. (Cancelled.)
7. (Cancelled.)
8. (Cancelled.)
9. (Cancelled.)
10. (Cancelled.)
11. (Cancelled.)
12. (Cancelled.)
13. (Cancelled.)
14. (Cancelled.)
15. (Cancelled.)
16. (Cancelled.)
17. (Cancelled.)
18. (Cancelled.)
19. (Cancelled.)
20. (Cancelled.)
21. (Cancelled.)
22. (Cancelled.)
23. (Cancelled.)
24. (Cancelled.)
25. (Cancelled.)
26. (Cancelled.)
27. (Cancelled.)
28. (Cancelled.)
29. (Cancelled.)

30. (Currently amended.) A method for thickening a brine during the recovery of oil and/or gas from a subterranean formation penetrated by a well in order to alleviate ~~the fluid loss of brine~~ into the formation which comprises introducing to the brine to be thickened a suspension comprising a cellulosic polymer suspended in an aqueous alkali formate solution, wherein the amount of suspension added to the brine is that sufficient to alleviate ~~the fluid loss of brine~~ into the subterranean formation and further wherein the thickened brine is introduced into the well during completion or workover.

31. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 30, wherein the amount of alkali formate in the suspension is greater than 40 weight percent.

32. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 30, wherein the amount of alkali formate in the suspension is between from about 40 to about 75 weight percent.

33. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 30, wherein the brine to be thickened with the suspension has a density greater than or equal to 11.6 ppg at 70°F.

34. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 33, wherein the brine to be thickened with the suspension has a density between from 11.6 to 14.2 ppg.

35. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 30, wherein the cellulosic polymer is selected from the group consisting of anionic and nonionic modified cellulose.

36. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 35, wherein the anionic or nonionic modified cellulose is selected from the group consisting of hydroxyethylcellulose and carboxymethyl hydroxyethylcellulose.

37. (Cancelled.)

38. (Cancelled.)

39. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 30, wherein the brine to be thickened is selected from the group consisting of brines of calcium chloride, calcium bromide, zinc bromide and mixtures thereof.

40. (Cancelled.)

41. (Cancelled.)

42. (Cancelled.)

43. (Cancelled.)

44. (Cancelled.)

45. (Cancelled.)

46. (Cancelled.)

47. (Cancelled.)

48. (Cancelled.)

49. (Cancelled.)

50. (Cancelled.)

51. (Cancelled.)

52. (Cancelled.)

53. (Cancelled.)

54. (Cancelled.)

55. (Cancelled.)

56. (Cancelled.)

57. (Currently amended.)      A method for thickening a brine during the recovery of oil and/or gas from a subterranean formation penetrated by a well in order to alleviate fluid loss of brine into the formation which comprises introducing to the brine to be thickened a suspension comprising a cellulosic polymer suspended in an aqueous salt solution, wherein the aqueous salt solution contains 40 weight percent or more of alkali formate and further wherein no more than 25% of the alkali formate is sodium formate, the remainder being potassium formate, cesium formate or a mixture, wherein either the density of the brine to be thickened is greater than 11.6 ppg or the density of the aqueous salt solution is greater than the density of the cellulosic polymer and further wherein the thickened brine is introduced into the well during completion or workover.

58. (Cancelled.)

59. (Cancelled.)

60. (Previously presented.)      The method of Claim 30, wherein the brine to be thickened further contains a crosslinker.

61. (Previously presented.)      The method of Claim 57, wherein the brine to be thickened further contains a crosslinker.

62. (Cancelled.)

63. (Cancelled.)

64. (Previously presented.)      The method of Claim 57, wherein the amount of alkali formate in the suspension is between from about 40 to about 75 weight percent.

65. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 57, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension has a density greater than or equal to 11.6 ppg at 70°F.

66. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 57, wherein the cellulosic polymer is selected from the group consisting of anionic and nonionic modified cellulose.

67. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 57, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension is selected from the group consisting of brines of calcium chloride, calcium bromide, zinc bromide and mixtures thereof.

68. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 57, wherein the brine to be thickened with the suspension has a density between from 11.6 to 14.2 ppg.

69. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 57, wherein the cellulosic polymer is selected from the group consisting of hydroxyethylcellulose and carboxymethyl hydroxyethylcellulose.

70. (Currently amended.) A method for thickening a brine during the recovery of oil and/or gas from a subterranean formation penetrated by a well in order to alleviate fluid loss of brine into the formation which comprises introducing to the brine to be thickened a suspension comprising a cellulosic polymer suspended in an aqueous alkali formate salt solution, wherein between from about 0.5 to about 8.0 pounds per barrel of cellulosic polymer is introduced to the brine and further wherein the thickened brine is introduced into the well during completion or workover.

71. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 70, wherein the brine to be thickened further contains a crosslinker.

72. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 70, wherein the cellulosic polymer is an anionic or nonionic modified cellulose.

73. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 70, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension has a density greater than or equal to 11.6 ppg at 70°F.

74. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 70, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension has a density between from 11.6 to 14.2 ppg.

75. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 70, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension is selected from the group consisting of brines of calcium chloride, calcium bromide, zinc bromide and mixtures thereof.

76. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 70, wherein the cellulosic polymer is selected from the group consisting of hydroxyethylcellulose and carboxymethyl hydroxyethylcellulose.

77. (Currently amended.) A method of alleviating ~~the fluid loss of brine~~ into a subterranean formation penetrated by a well during the recovery of oil and/or gas from the formation which comprises introducing to the formation a brine thickened with a suspension of a cellulosic polymer suspended in an aqueous alkali formate solution, wherein the amount of suspension added to the brine is that amount sufficient to alleviate ~~the fluid loss of brine~~ into the formation and further wherein the thickened brine is introduced into the well during completion or workover.

78. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 77, wherein the brine to be thickened further contains a crosslinker.

79. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 77, wherein the cellulosic polymer is an anionic or nonionic modified cellulose.

80. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 77, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension has a density greater than or equal to 11.6 ppg at 70°F.

81. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 77, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension has a density between from 11.6 to 14.2 ppg.

82. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 77, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension is selected from the group consisting of brines of calcium chloride, calcium bromide, zinc bromide and mixtures thereof.

83. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 77, wherein the cellulosic polymer is selected from the group consisting of hydroxyethylcellulose and carboxymethyl hydroxyethylcellulose.

84. (Currently amended.) A method for thickening a brine during the recovery of oil and/or gas from a subterranean formation penetrated by a well in order to alleviate fluid loss of brine into the formation which comprises introducing to the brine to be thickened a suspension comprising a cellulosic polymer suspended in an aqueous alkali formate salt solution, wherein the cellulosic polymer suspension contains between from about 45 to about 95 pounds per barrel of cellulosic polymer and further wherein the thickened brine is introduced into the well during completion or workover.

85. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 84, wherein the brine to be thickened further contains a crosslinker.

86. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 84, wherein the cellulosic polymer is an anionic or nonionic modified cellulose.

87. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 84, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension has a density greater than or equal to 11.6 ppg at 70°F.

88. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 84, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension has a density between from 11.6 to 14.2 ppg.

89. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 84, wherein the brine thickened with the suspension is selected from the group consisting of brines of calcium chloride, calcium bromide, zinc bromide and mixtures thereof.

90. (Previously presented.) The method of Claim 84, wherein the cellulosic polymer is selected from the group consisting of hydroxyethylcellulose and carboxymethyl hydroxyethylcellulose.